

Numbingly Exhausting Wizarding Time-travel

by Calculate Freedom

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Summary: Two years following Voldemort's defeat the once great Draco Malfoy is a teensy bit depressed. When Draco is thrown back into his seventeen year old body into a Hogwarts where there was no war, no Boy Who Lived and a disguised Voldemort he must save the Wizarding World with only Neville Longbottom and a timid third-year as allies. Be afraid, Draco. Be very afraid.

1. Draco is not Depressed

****I have read quite a lot of stories where Harry ends up in another dimension/time/reality. In fact one of my favourite fanfics written by a friend of mine is one. Black Coat, go read it. Also, it has cats. So I decided it's Draco's turn because I like messing with Draco, and I threw in Neville (god, I love him!) and a random OC for the heck of it. You're welcome internet. Here you go, Numbingly Exhausting Wizarding Time-travel. NEWTime-travel or NEWT for short. Yes, it is a parody of the Wizarding examinations. We have fun here. ****

****Rated T for a reason. Further warnings when necessary.****

****No non-canon pairings. So no Dreville, Dramione, Drarry, Drapple, DracoOC (heh, Draco/OC), NevOC (it doesn't work as well), OC/anyone (she's only thirteen, gross) or Neville with anyone but Hannah Abbott. There won't even be that much romance. I'm boring like that. ****

****Disclaimer: I own nothing except the plot and any original characters and even then it's iffy. I make no money from this, never will and even after that. ****

****Enjoy!****

Chapter 1: In Which Draco Malfoy is Not Depressed

Draco is not depressed. I repeat, not depressed. Malfoys do not get

depressed. Especially not the Draco Malfoy. But let's just say that he is. If he is, which he is not, then there would be a perfectly understandable explanation for it. And there is one.

You see, poor dear Draco lived through a war. No, his family suffered no causalities. No, none of the Malfoys ended up in Azkaban or any other prison for that matter. Even Draco can acknowledge Lucius Malfoy is a slippery git. With effortless utilisation of his powerful connections and shameless offerings of inside information, Lucius used his still razor sharp Slytherin cunning to manoeuvre the Malfoys out of every single charge against them. Sure, most of the Wizarding community still hated them but soon the Malfoys would again come to their former glory. They always did, after every fall from grace. That's the magic of high society breeding and money. A delicate art practiced by the Malfoy family for generations.

So Draco's family was relatively unscathed by the war. However, there is more to his story. By more I mean none other than the infamous, terrifying Lord Voldemort, previously known as Tom Marvolo Riddle before he became nose-less, pale, bald and extremely homicidal. Nasty business, being evil and immortal. Nasty business indeed.

As you may or may not be aware of Voldemort stayed with the Malfoys for a brief period of time in Malfoy Manor. He also conducted Death Eater meetings and other such doings in the esteemed Manor, due to Lucius' failure to get the much needed prophecy concerning the Boy Who Lived and the Dark Lord. Though Lucius was freed from Azkaban some time later he and his family became the lowest of the dastardly bunch that was Voldemort's followers.

Murders, plotting, torturing and all-round unpleasant activities took place in the Manor. Draco, sixteen then seventeen at the time, bore witness to only the surface of it. The surface was horrifying to the teenage boy. A teacher was killed in front of him. A classmate tortured in front of him. People imprisoned in the cellar. He had been raised on the view that those with Muggle blood were inferior. Draco had bullied, seen the distress of his targets and relished in it. He thought he wanted them dead; the Mudbloods, the blood traitors and those who opposed the Dark Lord.

It all changed when he saw the true pain and suffering inflicted by Voldemort and his followers. The year spent attempting to assassinate Dumbledore was fraught with the desperate fear that he would fail and forfeit his life and his parents'. Yet, facing down Dumbledore at wand-point, Draco knew he did not want to be a killer or a torturer. Being a Death Eater became a fight for survival and that of his family. He hated it and hated himself for being a coward. Draco did nothing except to help himself and, for the first time in his life, he realised the atrocity of it. How selfish, weak and wrong it was. Try as he might to justify it, most instances he could not do that.

Thus, if Draco is depressed it would be all Voldemort's fault. Draco reasoned that if Voldemort never did any of his whole coming-back-to-life bit then none of the drama would of happened and Draco would be a relatively trauma free teen. Though Voldemort was destroyed two years ago by none other than legendary Harry Potter "who Draco still hated but grudgingly respected for saving his life twice and ridding the world of the Bastard Who Will Not Be Named" Draco was now touched by this newfound conscience. It is terrible for

him. All the backstabbing moral repercussions of his actions he never knew before! Draco does not bully, taunt or mock for fear of hurting someone's feelings. He does not engage in duels in case of injury.

It is infuriating to not be able to take his frustrations out on his enemies. Privately his arrogance, though shaken, cuts his pillow deep with verbal barbs. It is hardly enough. How he longs to take fools down a peg or two with his sheer superiority. Utterly annoying. He can barely believe it but he misses having Potter around. Potter is an excellent target to torment when stress runs high. Too bad he is off being an Auror and protecting the Wizarding World and all that. The day Draco becomes a hero is the day Hermione Granger fails an exam.

Draco smooths back his hair in the mirror, scowls and messes up the shiny blonde perfection. He then proceeds to kick his dresser, swear and hop around on one foot before collapsing into a heap and trying not to wail. Okay, so Draco is depressed. But only a teensy bit and with absolute right to be so shut up you bloody prats! He is also working through some anger issues. Nothing to be alarmed about. Average, run of the mill stuff so don't you dare feel sorry for Draco. Yeah, he may be having a crisis at the age of nineteen after a major emotional and spiritual upheaval, shattering his entire worldview and way of life. So he may be having nightmares on a regular basis and curling into a ball more frequently than a young man should whilst loathing himself and wishing it could all be over. So what? Just because he is paler, thinner and a mere shell of his former self after two years following the bane of his existence, Voldemort's defeat doesn't mean- Dear Lord, Draco is going to cry.

He wipes his eyes determinedly. No Dark Lord or haunting past experiences will get Draco Malfoy down! He has a weapon so potent that Malfoys learnt it from birth as their defence mechanism since the dawn of time itself. A blank, collected sneer only pulled off by the most emotionally guarded and sly of people " the Malfoy Mask. Damn right you better believe Draco is the master at it. One does not grow up in the Malfoy household without complete control of the technique. I doubt you understand, unless you are a Malfoy yourself.

With Malfoy Mask in place, Draco mentally slaps himself. Twice. _That is it_, he tells himself resolvedly. _No more breaking down_. _You are a Malfoy and shall act as one even if I have to freeze your face like this. It has been two years since the war. Pull yourself together, Malfoy_!

After his rather frightening pep-talk, Draco is ready. None shall stand in the path of Malfoy. Not even Voldemort himself back from the grave. With a confident swagger indigenous to the Malfoy breed, Draco picks himself up and walks to his mirror. He restores his hair to its flawless, shiny glory; brushes imaginary particles of dirt from his immaculately tailored, expensive black robes and heads to work. What? Surprised Mr Malfoy has a job when daddy's bank account could have him sitting pretty for the rest of his life? Draco launched himself into the Ministry months ago. Partially as a distraction from his awful feelings, partially to rebuild the Malfoy name and create connections and partially to cultivate more money. One can never be too rich after all.

Look out witches and wizards. Draco is on a warpath and lest of all his pesky feelings will be in his way.

If only things went according to plan.

****A/N:** This was kind of the prologue. The action begins next chapter. It also contains Zabini. Look out ladies (and gentlemen, I don't judge. I'll probably ship it). Hey, if you want to read Draco angst go to my other story - Tattered Reputations. That is all angst. All angst. See you next time! Review, thanks dearies.**

2. Draco's Life Sucks

****Be warned.** There is an F-bomb dropped. That is what happens when your life sucks. ******

****Disclaimer:** I do not own Harry Potter. It is like a Crucio to the gut.******

Chapter 2: Where Draco Acknowledges His Life Sucks and Will Probably Get Worse

With great restraint on Draco's part he manages to not punch the wall of his bedroom. To do so would put his hand's wellbeing at risk and result in a possible trip to St Mungo's. No thank you. Draco refuses to be poked, prodded and given the stink-eye any more today!

Why is Draco not punching a wall but very much wanting to? Your concern is appreciated. Draco, poor, ever misfortunate Draco, did go to work and it was agony. The insufferable fools and dirty looks are just the tip of the iceberg. He has to put up with that almost every day.

Like nearly every morning it started off with a depressed fest, party of one; though it took longer to get over it than usual. Following that Draco spilled his pick-me-up coffee on the front of his precious robes. Nothing not fixed by a _scourgify_ but still, coffee. On his robes! Not in his mouth! And it was hot! Then an attempt to hit on an attractive, wealthy girl ended with her insulting the Malfoy name with a disgusted look on her face. It was humiliating, demoralising and downright unacceptable. That disrespectful witch was lucky Draco gave her the time of day! Then Draco was given mountains of paperwork to do. Then he missed more than half his lunch break because some self-absorbed idiot with a capital leave-me-be-so-I-can-commit-suicide-in-peace held him up discussing the pros and cons of Mister Memphrey's Magical Hair Mousse. When Draco thinks someone is self-absorbed it is the real deal. Then he got paired with _Jerry_ for an assignment. Honestly. _Jerry_. How he became a Ministry employee is a mystery to Draco and the entire Ministry. _Then_ "oh yes, there is more" the goddamn Slytherin prince Draco freaking, part gazelle he is so graceful, Malfoy tripped. That's right. He fell and landed on his beautiful, pale face (seriously, the man should be a _Twilight_ vampire he's so gorgeous, Draco often thinks to himself. Not that he knows what _Twilight_ is. Pfft. Don't talk crazy) smack bang upon leaving the Ministry. Metaphorical icing on the metaphorical horrible day cake.

Therefore Draco considers his display of such control admirable. A

steadying breath later, he rationalises that the day cannot get worse. Normally such a statement would bring irony into play however Draco is cautious. The day has exactly four hours and sixteen minutes left before it concludes and he is not going to leave his bedroom. Surely nothing could get worse in the four hours and sixteen minutes Draco would be spending in bed. He is fairly confident that his anguish will not grow any further. Alas, even Draco Malfoy can be wrong.

Draco's sleep was nightmare free. Peculiar. In fact, he did not dream at all. Yet when Draco awakens from his much needed slumber it is accompanied by a mildly irksome headache. Something is off from before although somehow familiar. It could be the poorer quality of the mattress or the forest green drapes. Draco Malfoy does not have forest green drapes over his bed, they remind him too much of Hogwarts. Even his body feels different. What is this? Draco does not like waking to surprises.

He sits up in the lacking bed with the offensive drapes and glares into the darkness. Something is there. He can hear it breathing. No, wait " multiple things breathing! As well as obnoxious snores reminiscent of a pig with a cold or his once roommate and crony Crabbe. But Crabbe is dead so it cannot be him. His eyes adjust gradually to the dim and he is met with a sight he had hoped would never live again. People, in his room! Except it is not Draco's room. It looks more like the Slytherin dormitories. Actually, it is an exact replica of the Slytherin dormitories complete with three sleeping boys in their respective beds and an empty bed where Blaise Zabini would have slept if it is indeed the Slytherin dormitories. Zabini is a notorious early riser.

Like a ninja, he creeps from the bed, finding himself wearing the silk pyjamas he has not worn since Hogwarts. After all, a grown man needs no such thing. Silk boxer shorts are more than adequate. Disconcerted, Draco locks himself in the bathroom. Why would he be in the Slytherin dormitories again when he had vowed never again to share his living space with anyone other than a sexy female? Four other teenage boys need not know Draco sings in the shower. What he does when keeping up personal hygiene is his business. If only Lucius' petition for a private set of rooms at Hogwarts for Draco had not gone south.

He looks in the mirror searchingly, hoping to find comfort in his reflection. What he sees is the opposite. His face is different. It is wrong. It is the face of a seventeen year old. What. The. Fuck. His face is more pointed and paler. Scotland is not the place to get a suntan. He is also slightly smaller, as he had filled out some more following Hogwarts. A glance at his collarbone and, horror upon horror, there is a pimple. Draco was fortunate enough in his teenage years to not get acne on his face, only his shoulders and back. But he outgrew the nasty pus-filled abominations when he was eighteen. This cannot be. Draco knows every one of his faces with precision that an ordinary person may find scary. He knows with certainty it is his seventeen year old face looking back at him in the mirror. Still handsome but not as handsome as his nineteen year old face. Why does the universe do this to Draco? Give him a handsome face then the next morning take it away for a slightly less handsome but handsome nonetheless face? It is not fair.

But when has the life of Draco Malfoy ever been fair?

Splashing cold water on his face changes nothing except the temperature. Draco bites back a swear when the icy water hits his skin like a slap. He used a little too much water. After some spluttering he takes a trip back to the bed that appears to be his one at Hogwarts but cannot be because that would be impossible to retrieve his wand and cast a drying charm on his silk pyjamas. They may be a relic of Hogwarts past but they were expensive. Geez. This is why Draco turned to silk boxers. Much less expensive area to spill liquids on.

Sufficiently not wet, Draco stalks out of the room. Quietly, of course. He isn't so rude as to wake a man from his beauty sleep; Merlin knows they need it. The entire school does, save a few exceptions. It is hard to match the elegant breeding of features such as Draco's. He goes in search of the Slytherin common room because if it is the actual dormitories at Hogwarts then there would be the common room. However Draco is none too sure whether or not it is Hogwarts. So when he finds the common room in the exact place it should be if this were in fact Hogwarts it is both a relief and unsettling.

Perched on a black settee with silver trim in the otherwise empty common room is Zabini. As per usual his posture is perfect as he reads a thick book, composed yet interested in its pages. This would be an image not unfamiliar to Draco had he been at Hogwarts but he is supposed to be nineteen. It should not be happening. Zabini does not appear different at all, another note of concern as Draco has not seen him since his seventh year. Zabini should be different. How is it they are both seventeen again?

With a schooled expression of boredom, Zabini looks up from his book. "Good morning Malfoy," he says upon seeing him. No hint of anything strange going on from his response. Blaise is a man of few words.

"Zabini, what year is it?" Draco snaps. Zabini raises an eyebrow haughtily. Draco shoots him an 'I will ask what I want and I don't need to give the likes of you a reason because I am a Malfoy so hold your tongue peasant' look. Zabini shrugs.

"1998," he tells Draco indifferently. At that precise moment Draco goes into shock. This is a dream, he assures himself. Since if it was not and somehow Draco went back in time then Voldemort would be alive. Voldemort cannot be alive. This is a dream. Sure.

****A/N:** This chapter was so much fun to write. It is nice to bring a twist of humour to the dark, depressing chasm that is my writing style. In case you're wondering, this is my take on Draco. I have always seen him as a bit of a drama queen, desperate to remain in the spotlight he has known since birth. Hence his manner. I hope it isn't too out of character. Review! ******

3. Potions with the Dead

Chapter 3: Potions with a Dead Man

If Draco were a plane he would be on autopilot. He behaves as he would during every other day at Hogwarts. Robotically he gets dressed

into his school robes and follows his fellow Slytherins to the Great Hall. There he sees dead person after dead person. He powerwalks to the Slytherin table and sits down firmly, fixing his gaze on the food spread out before him.

Someone touches Draco's shoulder and he jerks away in fear. "Hey Draco, are you okay?" Pansy Parkinson asks, worriedly. She sounds like his mother and it annoys Draco to no end. Pansy may have treated Draco as she should, with awe and fawning, but when they dated she was cloying. He mostly enjoyed her attention and being able to show off the fact he had a girlfriend.

"I'm fine," Draco clips, keeping his gaze down. He hears a huff and Pansy storms off. Good riddance. He is in no mood to put up with her prattle.

Theodore Nott chortles. "Parkinson wants you back bad," he snorts. "Careful. You might find a love potion in your pumpkin juice."

Perhaps if Draco were not feeling out of sorts he would have said 'of course she wants me back'. Instead he snarls; "Shut up. I'm tired." Nott shuts up. Thank Merlin.

Breakfast passes with Draco not tasting a single bite of the food he swallowed. Nott and Zabini looked expectantly at Draco. "Coming to Potions, Malfoy?" Nott queries cautiously. With a curt nod from Draco the three Slytherins descend to the dungeons. Milling around the corridor outside the Potions room are the handful of students presumably taking N.E.W.T. level Potions, including the 'Golden Trio' as dubbed by the Wizarding media: Hermione Granger, Ron Weasley and Harry Potter. Damn.

Astonishingly, they are not huddled together as they generally were back at Hogwarts. Potter stands in the shadows, brooding. Pretty much how he spent all his fifth year. Granger is clutching books like a normal person would money. Nothing new. Weasley brightens when he sees Draco and honest to goodness sneers. "Well, look here. Malfoy. You're looking very pretty today." Draco gapes at Weasley. What on Earth is he saying? "Did your boyfriends remember to tell you?"

"What? I don't know what you're talking about Weasel but I can't be bothered with your envy today, alright?" It may be unusual for Weasley to initiate conflict but even out of practise Draco is capable of retorting under pressure. Don't mess with the master. It is Weasley's turn to gape at Draco. His face begins to stain pink. Before his face can go signature Weasley red a man sickening familiar â€" black, billowing cloak; sallow skin; greasy, stringy hair; hooked nose â€" intervenes.

"I suggest you cease loitering in the halls," Snape drawls, looking down at his students with displeasure. "If you wish to pass your N.E.W.T.s I suspect many of you will need every minute of learning you can get." Nervously, the students file into the classroom. Weasley clenches his fists and glares at Draco. "Mr Weasley, you may not understand this being thick as you are but Potions is not conducted standing in the corridor staring moronically at your classmates," Snape says coolly. "Go in."

Weasley flinches and reluctantly does as Snape ordered. Draco doesn't move. He is not sure he can. Here, standing before him, is the man that saved him from Voldemort's wrath by killing Dumbledore in his place. The man then murdered by Voldemort for the Elder Wand when it should have been Draco. Snape is dead. Yet here he is alive and teaching Potions. "That means you too, Mr Malfoy," Snape adds. As though confounded Draco shuffles into the classroom and sits next to Nott.

"At last," Snape swoops like a bat to the front of the classroom. "I was beginning to wonder if we would ever begin." A pointed look from Snape makes even this new bold Weasley pale. "Today we will again brew the Draught of Living Death. Page ten, Advanced Potion Making. If you remember correctly, though no doubt only Ms Granger would be so obsessive as to do so, it is a complex potion which, as proven the last time it was brewed by this class, is beyond all of your abilities. However, this time I expect an at least passable solution, lest you prove yourselves utterly incompetent," Snape jeers. "For homework you shall write an essay on the properties and uses of the Draught of Living Death. At least one roll of parchment long, due next lesson. And to those of you who do not succeed to brew it at 'Acceptable' will have to write at least two rolls. Are we clear?"

A few murmured "Yes sir," and "Yes Professor," ring through the classroom. The students immediately begin flipping through their Potions book, weighting their scales and pulling their cauldrons closer. That is except Draco Malfoy, who is currently being hit over the head with irony. He was just told to brew the Draught of Living Death for a man that should be dead but is living. No. This is not happening, Draco decides. He has finally had the mental collapse he always predicted he would have and is now hallucinating. Draco scrunches his eyes shut to centre himself in reality and takes a couple of shaky breaths. The memories of the night of Dumbledore's murder play out on his eyelids. Seeing Dumbledore calm as Draco fell apart, still pointing his wand at the old man. The Death Eaters goading him to do it, kill Dumbledore. Snape pushing past Draco, raising his wand to point it at Dumbledore and say two words that would send him falling from the Astronomy Tower.

"Avada Kedavra! Avada Kedavra! Avada Ke-_"

"Mr Malfoy, do you need to be sent to Madam Pomfrey?" Snape interrupts. Draco just about screams 'Why did you do it?! How are you alive?!' but he does not. Instead he looks like he saw a ghost which he practically did so it is a very appropriate response.

After a few seconds of looking terrified Draco manages to stutter out; "N-no. I'm tired," he explains weakly.

"I see," Snape says, unconvinced. "Well then Mr Malfoy, I recommend you get plenty of sleep tonight. I would not want you falling behind." Though it is Snape saying it, it lacks his typical sarcastic bite. He sounds genuine.

Little does Snape know, Draco has already passed both his sixth year "miraculously, considering what occurred during it" and his N.E.W.T.s. The Draught of Living Death, though no cake walk, is manageable with practise. And Draco has practised. This turns out to be beneficial. The day before, if Draco had been forced to brew the

Draught of Living Death he would have found it boring. Now, however, he is in too much shock to care. The class rolls together into a blur and in the end Draco has a more than passable potion. Snape nods in approval upon seeing the concoction but there is still that worry present. Draco does not need concern. Goddamn dead men.

He stumbles after Nott to Charms; Zabini thought himself above the subject so did not take it at N.E.W.T. level. Charms is significantly less traumatising for Draco. Exhibit A: Flitwick is not supposed to be dead. Exhibit B: Weasley, Potter and the lot do not engage. It helps his vision has gone a little fuzzy around the edges. Much easier to not focus on anything.

Still in shock, Draco goes to his third class of his impossible day back at Hogwarts – Defence Against the Dark Arts. Fellow Slytherins converge, chatting excitedly about the upcoming subject. Many Slytherins favour DADA because it is the closest one can get to the Dark Arts at this blasted school. Though not all Slytherins are inclined towards them and the other Houses are not exempt from an appreciation of them, Slytherins are generally more willing to use them. As per the traits of the House, they are resourceful and will use any tools at their disposal. The Dark Arts are a very useful tool. Having parents that are dark wizards and witches certainly give those Slytherins a curiosity for them.

Perhaps if Draco had been listening to the conversations of those he once thought of as friends as they wandered the halls of Hogwarts he would have been more prepared. He may have heard how reverently they spoke of the DADA teacher and wondered who it could be if not Snape or another fool they suffered through in previous years. He may have heard the name of the mysterious professor and what he was like. Draco was too far off in his own head to hear any of it.

Entering the classroom, Draco sees a new teacher, not uncommon at Hogwarts since every year the position becomes available due to some incident or another. The professor smiles warmly at his students as they come in but Draco observes something secret behind his gaze, like it does not mean what it is assumed to. He is dressed smartly, this professor, and his eyes are keen as he surveys his classroom. Old yet handsome, maybe in his fifties, sixties or even seventies. It is hard to tell, he has an almost ageless quality to his face. Something about his face is vaguely familiar, as though Draco has met him before. Is it the look in his eyes? The way he holds himself, walks? Draco could swear he recognises him –

"Hey Professor Riddle," one student greets cheerfully just as Draco takes a seat. Riddle. No. Not possible.

"Good afternoon Mr Macmillan," Professor Riddle replies. That voice. It can't be.

"Tom Riddle," Draco whispers under his breath. "It isn't Tom Riddle?" he intends it as a statement but it comes out a question. Could it be?

"What are you talking about?" hisses Daphne Greengrass, another Slytherin pureblood. "Call him professor, not his first name. You'll get in trouble."

The muttering of the class dies down as soon as Riddle raises his

hands. The class stares admiringly at him. Potter, Draco notices, gives the man rapt attention. This is so, so wrong. Potter in awe of someone who could very well be Voldemort? It is all wrong. Draco searches this strange Potter's face and for the first time sees that under that black mess of hair is no lightning bolt scar that marks him as the Boy Who Lived. Potter is not the baby that survived the Killing Curse or the Chosen One anymore. Potter is just a regular student. And Voldemort is Tom Riddle again. It- it's impossible. He is alive. He cannot be alive. Potter destroyed him, every part of his wretched soul. But Potter is seventeen again and scar-less. Voldemort is not nose-less, bald or freakish. Voldemort is not dead.

No.

****A/N:** Things have gotten a littler darker but honestly it was so much fun including some students and Snape. Oh you loveable bastard you. In my story after the Battle of Hogwarts Voldemort's original name Tom Riddle became common knowledge and most people referred to him as such out loud. That is why Draco immediately is like 'holy shit, it can't be Voldemort,' when Ernie calls him Professor Riddle. Also, I do think Draco would have been traumatised from his experiences during his final years of school. Thus he reacted with denial and terror. Hell, if I came face to face with the freaking Dark Lord I would do the same. ******

****Review!** Was Snape awesome enough? What did you think? I'd love to know. ******

****Side note:** my OC is coming up, a thirteen year old girl, but as of yet she does not have a name despite her fully developed personality. If you have any suggestions go ahead. Please. I can't call her OC the entire fic. Thanks dearies.******

4. A Psychotic Break

Chapter 4: So You're Having a Psychotic Break

Draco freezes. The thing he fears more than anything, Voldemort, is standing in the same room as him, alive. Far too alive. Time slows around him, the world swirling into a formless mass of colour, sounds echo like he is underwater. Only one thing is clear in his mind. Voldemort is alive.

Watching, horrified, Voldemort disguised as Riddle pulls out his yew wand. Draco does not think as Voldemort opens his mouth. He simply grabs his own wand and screams; "Expelliarmus!" The spell hits Voldemort, sending his wand flying and Voldemort stumbling backwards. With deft Seeker reflexes, Draco catches the wand with ease. "You monster!" he cries, all the terrible things he saw Voldemort and his followers do rushing back to him. Charity Burbage murdered in front of him. Hermione Granger tortured. Countless others mutilated and killed because of him. "Your- your tricks won't work! You're dead! You're DEAD!" He must be.

Voldemort holds up a hand, as if to calm. Draco will not be so easily manipulated by a false face and false charm. He knows what lies beneath it. The cruelty and evil. "Draco," Voldemort begins warily.

"_Stupefy! _Petrificus Totalus!" The spells fire in rapid succession, striking Voldemort in the chest. "You fucking bastard!" Draco yells as Voldemort is flung back, arms and legs snapping together. Though not usually one for such Muggle-like profanities, vile words suit the vile creature. Then cowardice kicks in. He wants to kill Voldemort, make him suffer, but he cannot. Instead he flees the scene and his greatest fear.

Panting, Draco runs like Fiendfyre is on his heels. Skittering around corner after corner, down and up staircases, through corridors Draco has no real idea where he is going except away from Voldemort and where everything is wrong. He needs to get back to Malfoy Manor, back to being nineteen, back to where Voldemort is dead. He halts abruptly when he reaches a dead end and swallows a sob. Looking at his hands there is two wands: his ten inch long hawthorn wand with unicorn hair core and Voldemort's. Voldemort's wand, he has to get rid of it. With all his strength, Draco brings it down onto his knee and breaks it in two. He drops the pieces of the Dark Lord's wand and stomps on them. Voldemort will not use it as an instrument to hurt, torture and murder again.

Finally Draco sprints onto the seventh floor of Hogwarts. The Room of Requirement. That is where he should go. He finds the tapestry of Barnabas the Barmy, walks past the area of the door and thinks of what he needs. A place to be safe. The door appears and Draco almost cries with relief. Safety at last.

He is about to open the door when someone shouts; "Found him!" and the world goes black.

When Draco wakes it is to the ancient face of Albus Dumbledore, sitting next to his bed in the Hospital Wing. "I'm glad to see you awake, Draco," Dumbledore smiles and Draco believes he might be sick. "Professor Babbling worried she had accidentally injured you. Her Sleep Charm was rather powerful."

Draco's thoughts are muddled with the recent spell, fear and confusion. He attributes his outburst to his current state. "You're dead," Draco tells Dumbledore. "Professor Snape killed you. He's dead. Voldemort killed him. Voldemort's dead. Potter killed him. Why is Voldemort teaching Defence Against the Dark Arts? He is the Dark Arts! Why are you all alive? You're supposed to be dead. Voldemort's supposed to be dead. He's going to kill me. Merlin, he's going to kill me and destroy everything!" At this point, Draco is hyperventilating. It does not help that the person he spent most of his sixth year trying to assassinate is staring serenely back. All the panic and suffocating terror Draco felt during his mission that year floods him. He never saw Snape die and the Malfoys huddled in the back of the Great Hall did not get a good look at Voldemort's dead body but Dumbledore, he was murdered by Snape right in front of Draco after his own failure to kill the old man. Without a shadow of doubt in Draco's mind is Dumbledore dead. Yet an entire person of doubt is there before him.

"Draco, calm yourself," Dumbledore says kindly. Draco blinks away tears. "You attacked a teacher-"

"I attacked Voldemort! He's going to kill me!" Draco interrupts, embarrassed by the shrillness of his voice.

"Professor Riddle is not this Voldemort character and he will not kill you," Dumbledore continues undeterred. "It is a very serious transgression, to attack a teacher. Especially unprovoked. You are very lucky that Professor Riddle was unhurt and chose to excuse you from your actions."

"No! You don't understand!" Voldemort will burst in any minute and obliterate Draco, he is sure of it. "I'm not crazy! He's evil. He forced me when I was sixteen to kill you because my father failed him. He murdered Professor Burbage right in front of me. He. Is. A. Mass. Murderer. He preached pureblood supremacy and planned to take over the Wizarding World and rule over all Muggles and Muggle-borns! He's insane. Absolutely insane, cruel and vicious. He's dead! Why is he here? He'll kill me and my family. He'll finally kill Potter. You have to get him out or evacuate the school or something! PLEASE!" Draco begs with the great wizard he always thought senile. Dumbledore does nothing.

"Draco," Dumbledore reaches to place a frail hand on Draco's shoulder but he flinches away.

"You're dead!" Draco shrieks. "This isn't happening! It's a nightmare! a hallucination. Voldemort's dead. He's dead-dead-dead-dead. Potter did it. I saw it. This isn't real," he babbles incoherently. Madam Pomfrey bustles over, looking stern.

"Albus, stop disturbing the poor boy," Madam Pomfrey scolds, flapping her hands like a large, angry bird. "He's suffering from a psychotic break. He doesn't need any more mayhem."

Dumbledore nods his head politely. "I trust your judgement Poppy. Simply wanted to make sure Mr Malfoy was alright. Bathsheda was most frantic."

"Off with you Albus," Madam Pomfrey chides fondly. "He will be alright with proper care and rest." Dumbledore leaves and it soothes Draco slightly, to not have another dead man right there. "Now tell me Mr Malfoy, do you recognise me?"

Draco nods tersely. This batty old witch thinks he has lost it. But how could his entire life be lies from his own mind? Not only is it impossible as far as Draco is concerned that he could construct his whole life as a mere fantasy but it is also implausible. He is as sane as any that lived through the Battle of Hogwarts.

"Very good," Madam Pomfrey sighs with relief. "Mr Malfoy, I am to give you a Calming Draught and then I will ask you a few questions so I know more of your condition. Do you think you are well enough for it?"

Should he trust Madam Pomfrey? The old woman seems harmless enough but who knows? She could be in league with Riddle. On the other hand, Draco is on the end of his tether. Seeing Snape, Voldemort and Dumbledore alive all in a row is too much for him to handle. Too overwhelming. And he would really appreciate a Calming Draught right now. So! "Yes," Draco says hesitantly.

With a kind smile, Madam Pomfrey hands him the potion and Draco downs

it in one gulp. Instantly it takes effect and he feels calmer than he did moments ago. The knowledge that Voldemort is in the school and of all the other events is still there but it does not feel as urgent or frightening. As if Draco is removed from his troubles. "Excellent," Madam Pomfrey declares. "Tell me if any of the question distress you. Your health is my priority. We'll start small. Please answer truthfully. To help yourself you have to help me. What is your name?"

"Draco Malfoy," he deadpans.

"I know," the matron chuckles. "I told you, we're starting off easy. How old are you?"

Ah, and the questions become difficult. Draco knows the answer â€"nineteen â€" but what to tell Madam Pomfrey? Should he tell her the truth; that he is actually nineteen years old yet in his seventeen-year-old body? Or should he lie and say he is seventeen? It brings him back to his own queries. Can he trust her? It is only his age, "I'm supposed to be nineteen but when I woke up this morning I looked seventeen." That came out crazier than he thought it would. He can see the concern swimming in her eyes. Had he not been influenced by artificial calm Draco would have been pissed off.

"Okay dear," he can hear apprehension in her voice too. Apparently she is not even going to extend the courtesy of scepticism. "Where are you now? Do you know?"

"The Hospital Wing on the fourth floor at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry."

"And which House are you in?"

"Slytherin."

"Very good," she exclaims again, brightening slightly. "I am going to ask something harder, okay? Can you tell me what exactly do you think is wrong?"

Draco pauses. How much should he let slip? Back to that same question. Can he trust her?

"Take your time. I am here to help you get better," Madam Pomfrey coaxes gently. Draco resists the urge to groan. Under the Calming Draught the logical thing to do is clearer than ever. It does not mean he has to like it.

"I think I'm in an alternate reality." Madam Pomfrey radiates pure disbelief underneath her soothing smile at Draco's claim.

"Go on," she encourages.

He takes a deep breath. "Before I woke up this morning I was nineteen unquestionably and there had been a war in the Wizarding World. I lived through it. Long story short, there was an evil man named Tom Riddle who later took on the name Voldemort. He thought Muggles and Muggle-borns were inferior, wanted to dominate the Wizarding World, spread fear and grow in power with the help of his followers, Death Eaters. Like Grindelwald but worse. When he cast a Killing Curse at Harry Potter it rebounded and temporarily destroyed him in 1981. In

1995 he came back and started the Second Wizarding War, rising back to power. Many people died. Here at Hogwarts, 1998, Harry Potter defeated him and the war finished." Even with Calming Draught coursing through him Draco burns with shame. He was a Death Eater, if only for a year and a bit. He caused suffering. He was a source of fear for all those Muggle-borns worrying about a visitor in the night, with Unforgivables at wands' tip.

Madam Pomfrey nods solemnly once Draco's story finishes. "Dear, I'm afraid you've had a psychotic break," she informs him sadly. Calming Draught or no Calming Draught, Draco is pissed off.

****A/N:** There you go. A good old bout of Draco angst. Could have been a better chapter in my opinion. My Madam Pomfrey feels off. I'm sorry I didn't do her justice. Bye dearies. Review.**

5. This is it?

Chapter 5: This is it?

Potions were administered, charms cast and all round healing performed. Madam Pomfrey left Draco to rest, turning to fuss over the only other patient in the Hospital Wing – a silent third-year girl.

Draco stares pensively at his sheets. Despite all of the remedies Madam Pomfrey forced on him, she decided it best to let him sleep naturally. Thus Draco is not tired in the least. He has to stay the night and possibly another few days, depending on how he recovers from his "psychotic break". They are a bunch of idiots, Draco thinks to himself, for believing that. It's Voldemort. It has to be. His heart rate spikes just thinking about the Dark Lord. He needs to go on the run. Voldemort will strike and kill him. _But what about everyone else? _a little voice that sounds annoyingly like Potter whispers in Draco's head.

_Everyone else? What about _me? _Draco hisses back silently.

There is no one else to stop Voldemort. They don't know what a monster he is. You have to warn them, the voice retaliates.

They think I'm crazy! I did try and warn them but they won't listen! What else am I supposed to do? The voice in his head has nothing. Of course it does not. Life has not been simple for Draco Malfoy since Voldemort rose back from the dead. Really, it's all Voldemort's fault. Why exactly does Voldemort have to make everything so damn difficult?

By the time it is nightfall Draco still has no clue about what to do. Currently he is leaning towards the run and go into hiding option. However his conscience will not allow him to just leave. Two things get in the way of its wishes, for Draco to stop Voldemort. One: the whole 'he's nuts' issue. Two: Draco is a coward. He readily acknowledges it and occasionally hates himself for it. Yet that does not change his Slytherin nature to look after himself first. Irritating conscience is getting in the way of that.

Finally the nosey, old matron leaves the Hospital Wing after fluttering around and fussing over her two charges all day. But

before she left she threatened that if Draco is not asleep in the next two hours she will put him to sleep. That sounded more terrifying than it should have. The third-year girl, "Ollie" Madam Pomfrey called her, did not get similar treatment. Only a pat on the head and soothing words. It is understandable. Draco saw her expression. She looked empty, as if given the Dementor's Kiss. She looked so vulnerable.

Draco gazes at the ceiling, frown on his face and mind going in circles. He remains stuck for ideas. Massaging his temples and sighing Draco racks his brains. Voldemort has the whole of Hogwarts under his thumb and Draco cannot just let that continue. Unfortunately this time Draco Malfoy has to be the hero and he is not happy about it. He needs help.

After a solid twenty minutes brainstorming and resolutely not sleeping Draco hears the padding of feet in the Hospital Wing. He quickly makes a grab for his wand but there is nothing to grab. Madam Pomfrey has it so he will not hurt himself. Shit. If Draco dies he will blame her. Maybe it is a prelude to him becoming a ghost cursed to float around Hogwarts until he accepts his revenge plan is for naught. That would entail further difficulty as ghosts are notoriously unchanging and to accept something one has to change. Wait, the person is still coming. Think on your feet, Malfoy. His eyelids fly shut and he slows his breathing, feigning sleep, suspecting either Madam Pomfrey or Voldemort. Draco refuses to be unprepared. But he is. Madam Pomfrey, if he is murdered you will regret it.

"You're awake," a young girl's voice states softly. Draco opens his eyes cautiously and at the foot of his bed is the third-year patient, presumably "Ollie". What kind of name is that for a girl anyway? Who would name a baby girl Ollie? Draco has decided parents can be very idiotic. Hey, let's name her a boy's name! Hey, let's get our son involved with a hate group! Idiotic parents.

"What do you want?" Draco snaps quietly. He is in no mood for little girls bugging him in the middle of the night.

"I believe you," Ollie whispers. "It-" her eyes lower and she wraps her arms around her torso, "it happened to me too. I woke up thirteen. I'm fifteen." She peers at Draco so fearfully, eyes full of horror he is incapable of imagining. "Is he here? You Know Who?" Her voice crack and Draco can see the beginning of tears.

Draco thought he felt helpless a few moments ago. Now he feels utterly petrified. She's about to cry! What does he do? Usually he is the cause of tears for those weaker than him, before the war. Not knowing what else to try he tells her the truth. "Yes."

He is not sure what he expected but it is not her reaction. Her face goes blank, like her consciousness left her body. A precious few tears run down her cheeks, though they seem to be only remnant of a moment ago. Ollie leaves Draco's bedside and returns to her own. Draco watches as she curls into foetal position and stares at nothing. It is unnerving. Whatever this girl has been through it is something beyond even Draco's experiences. The murder and torturing he saw, what she saw was worse. It is another ember in the fire of his hatred towards Voldemort. And another shadow of fear cast by the terrible Dark Lord.

Come morning Draco is subjected to several various techniques to cure his addled mind. None of them work. Ollie coming to him last night, telling him she believes, is all the proof Draco needs. He has not imagined Voldemort and the wars. And Ollie still curled in a ball, caught in a trap of horror is confirmation. It is real.

But Madam Pomfrey does not know that.

Eventually she gives up. "I'm afraid, Mr Malfoy, that we must wait for your brain to right itself," Madam Pomfrey finally says. "No amount of magic I do will get you through this. In time your memories will return. For now you need rest and as little stress as possible." Absent-mindedly Madam Pomfrey straightens Draco's sheets. "Another day in the Hospital Wing at least," she announces.

Draco is about to groan in frustration, the Hospital Wing is incredibly boring, but so far he has not been plagued by dead witches and wizards. Voldemort has not attacked yet. Things are looking up. Though it is not much when the situation is already in the gutter. So he accepts his fate. Another day in the Hospital Wing to decide what to do.

Yeah, it does not make the Hospital Wing any less boring. It is no help whatsoever that Draco is well aware of the fact Voldemort is like a snake, waiting to strike. He is cunning. After he came back following Cedric Diggory's murder he kept hidden, amassing followers and regrowing his strength. He did not outright take over the Ministry; he plotted and wormed his way in from the inside until the entire Ministry, Daily Prophet and Wizarding Britain were under his control. Clearly he made Hogwarts believe that he is good. Of course Salazar Slytherin's heir is a snake. There is some poetic justice in it. It would be stupid if Hufflepuff's heir was a snake. That is the beauty in the universe seemingly aligning itself to the trivial matters of fitting a family lineage.

Three hours later and even thinking about Voldemort is tedious. Draco has nothing to do and Madam Pomfrey is no help. He requests a book from his belongings but she deems it too stressful on his "delicate mental state". It could "upset" him. Like it would even matter because Draco is going to die from sheer boredom and no amount of persuasion can convince her of his need for entertainment. Then he will come back as a ghost anyway to haunt Madam Pomfrey because she sure knows how to put his life at risk.

Snatches of conversation drift from outside of the large Hospital Wing doors, where Madam Pomfrey recently flitted. Draco sings a song in his head, The Weird Sisters' chart topping Magic Works, in an attempt to skive off aforementioned death by boredom. Only to be interrupted mid-chorus when a boy comes into the Hospital Wing. Another patient?

"You have five minutes," Madam Pomfrey reminds the person sternly, fierce when it comes to the wellbeing of the poorly. So a visitor then. Possibly for Ollie. None of Draco's Slytherin friends would visit him.

What Draco was absolutely not expecting under any circumstances was Neville Longbottom. Neville. Longbottom. Which is why when he comes to stand by Draco's bedside he does an excellent impersonation of a

fish with nothing witty OR cutting to say. Instead what comes out of his mouth is; "We're not friends."

Neville gives him a look that confirms this statement. He looks confident, as he did in seventh year, though not cocky. The look of a man assured with his own self-worth. On the other hand, Draco during seventh year looked frightened ninety percent of the time. The look of a man who hated himself. Good to know nothing has really changed since Voldemort's defeat. Except, Voldemort is now undefeated. Well, isn't that a terrible, terrible steaming plate of irony?

"This is not the Hogwarts we know. You seem to be the only one aware of it. That's why I need your help to stop You Know Who because you want him dead just like the rest of us," Neville explains. Even knowing Longbottom is an Auror and was vital to the defeat of Voldemort all Draco can see is the chubby, nervous kid that was easy to make fun of. He glances at Ollie hunched under her bed sheets. Neville Longbottom and a broken third-year as his allies? Just his luck.

****A/N:** I'm glad Neville finally showed up. As testimony to this the entire chapter will be dedicated to him (also to ****BloodyCamellia****, my second reviewer after ****Lynn D. Mariza**** [who is an awesome writer, check out her story ****C'est La Vie**** if you're into X-men and HP]). Reviews are always help negative or positive. I want to improve as a writer so give me your feedback. I would love to hear it. Thank you so much ****Bloody Camellia ****and ****Lynn D. Mariza**** for your support. Bye dearies. Look forward to Neville.**

****P.S.** I finally named my OC, Ollie Chiu. Yes, this was done intentionally. I enjoy myself.**

6. Auror, Herbologist and Time Traveller

Chapter 6: The Trials and Tribulations of Neville Longbottom – Auror, Herbologist and Time Traveller

Neville's life has never been easy. Just when it is going well some calamity is bound to happen. Naturally, as he was relatively happy at nineteen, he would be thrown back in time into an alternate universe because that is simply the sort of thing that happens when you are Neville.

Being an Auror is not too bad. It's more Harry's, Ron's and co.'s thing than his. Neville is not half bad at duelling and directly after the Battle of Hogwarts the remaining Death Eaters loyal to Voldemort had to be hunted down. But now most of them are safely locked away in Azkaban and Neville is not needed so much anymore, except for the boring paperwork. Neville is thinking about focusing more on Herbology. Professor Sprout is said to be retiring soon. Perhaps he will take her position.

The only downside to working at Hogwarts, surrounded by plants all day, every day, is that he will not be able to stop by his favourite haunt, The Leaky Cauldron. He will admit, it is not the drinks and accommodations so much as the friendly blonde barmaid, Hannah Abbott, which draws him there on his breaks. Nothing better than a warm mug of Butterbeer and Hannah's smiling face after a long day at the Auror Office.

The dreaded night of no return, Neville had gone to bed as per usual, internally cataloguing the differences between Puffapods and Snargaluff-pods while he drifted off. While Puffapods are generally viewed as less dangerous than the Snargaluff plant there have been cases of Puffapods suddenly erupting due to metric pressure in the atmosphere, the force of the beans-projectiles injuring those nearby. There are also several distinct variations in the pods of each plant though they are composed of the same core components, thus both plants thrive in dragon-waste due to the nutrients foun... and you don't care. Neville really wants that Herbology job.

He fell into a dreamless sleep " so far, so good. In the morning he opened his eyes " so far, so good " to a Gryffindor bed in Gryffindor dormitories filled with five Gryffindor boys in the Gryffindor Tower, Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. When Neville wanted to go to Hogwarts this is not quite what he meant. With the old lament " _why is it always me?_ " Neville used his pro-Auror skills to scope the situation. By that, he looked around a bit and subtly asked a few people some probing questions. Through this simple but effective method he found out a number of things. A) He was once again a seventh year at Hogwarts. B) Harry Potter was scar-less and a lot more of a loner. C) Voldemort never existed and aside from Grindelwald, there had been no further wars. D) Professor Riddle, as in Tom Marvalo "I am Lord Voldemort" Riddle, was the DADA teacher. Isn't that just peachy? Like dragon pox.

Had he been a good few years younger he may have been the Neville they all saw: a bumbling, unconfident, all round unskilled child (though he was always skilled at Herbology, people just never seem to count it). But no longer. Neville is an Auror for pity's sake! He pulled the sword of Gryffindor out of the Sorting Hat and used it to destroy Voldemort's final Horcrux! He, Neville Longbottom, stood against the most infamous Dark wizard in history because it was the right thing to do! Neville may not be perfect, but he is not and never was a fool. He may have been a nervous, awkward mess in the past and occasionally still is but, gosh darn it, he is not worthless! He will undo whatever dastardly plot is going on. The Wizarding World is in danger and it is up to him to help it. However, there is a slight hitch. Neville has no idea about what, how or why this is happening or what to do. Back to square one.

So Neville was forced, by the cruel hand of Fate, to act. Neville is not, nor will he ever be, an actor. A good one that is. He hates pretending and lying and cheating, etcetera, etcetera, and therefore acting is rather uncomfortable. Not to mention it makes him nervous and sweaty. But for Neville to save the Wizarding World, he was forced to act normal. Operation: assimilate a seventh year until he knows what is happening and what to do.

Thankfully, no one noticed Neville's terrible acting. Unfortunately while being simultaneously fortunate, Neville was often nervous and sweaty during his Hogwarts years so it was not suspicious. Breakfast passed without incident. Neville did, however, notice that just as Riddle was alive many other who had died during the war " such as Cedric Diggory, Snape, Dumbledore, Colin Creevey and Lavender Brown " were as well. It was curious. Was it like with the portraits? Were bodies transfigured and infused with an imprint of their departed soul? Neville could not very well go up and ask them. Not when he was going au naturale. Wait, no, Neville was fully clothed.

He is not some sort ofâ€| some sort of inappropriateâ€| person. He may have confidence but not _that_ brand of it.

Lessons went well. Herbology was first and it was nice to be back in the Greenhouse, in his element. If anything it cemented his resolve to be a teacher. Charms followed, leisurely in comparison to Auror missions and the Battle of Hogwarts. He did vaguely notice something about Draco seemed off, but only due to his on-alert mode and he wrote it away as a tantrum from the spoiled rich boy. Yep, lessons went well. Until Defence Against the Dark Arts.

Of course, Neville predicted it would be hellish in some way, shape or form. Voldemort was teaching the class for crying out loud! Next to Bellatrix Lestrange, it was his worst nightmare. Neville got it right. The only time he regretted succeeding at Divination. It took two seconds for it all to dissolve into madness. Professor Riddle, aka Voldemort Crazy Evil Pants, pulled out his wand and Draco Malfoy â€" Draco Blood Purist Death Eater Malfoy â€" disarmed him. He started ranting about him being dead and then knocked Voldy down for the count. Personally Neville wanted to join him and would have, had he not been in absolute shock _Malfoy_ took him down. Malfoy ran away and Neville was hit with the urge to throw a dance party. It was too simple.

It _was_ too simple.

A student quickly freed Professor Voldemort from the spells' influence. To Neville's further utter distress it was Harry who did it. Harry, who should have been the Boy Who Lived but instead was the Boy Who Helped His DADA Professor Get Back Up Who Happened to Be the One Who Killed His Parents.

The rest past pretty rapidly. The professors and some students â€" though not Neville obviously, who right now had given Malfoy a number of brownie points â€" went on a school-wide hunt for Malfoy. Professor Babbling apparently had found him and accidentally put him under a rather strong Sleep Charm. Malfoy was taken to the Hospital Wing and all Hogwarts could talk about was how mad he was. Neville knew better. It seemed to him that Malfoy was somehow also from the same reality Neville was from. If Neville was to get out of this he would need help and right now, the only help was in the shape of Malfoy. At least he seemed to hate Voldemort as much as Neville. Butâ€| Malfoy. Curse his luck.

The next available opportunity, which happened to be the following day, a Saturday, Neville went to visit the Hospital Wing. It took a lot of wheedling, pleading and a firm stance but Neville eventually convinced Madam Pomfrey to let him see Malfoy. She gave him a warning look as he went in. Though he is an Auror that woman still scared him enough to keep him on his guard. He approached the pale, blonde boy, looking every bit the invalid and the first thing Malfoy said was; "We're not friends."

Neville could have rolled his eyes. But he did not, to show him he meant no ill will. Then he explained why he was here. Malfoy gave him the same disbelieving look Neville had received for his entire life. This is the son of the Auror Longbottoms? This is someone who got into Gryffindor, House of the Brave? This is the boy who fought in the Battle at the Department of Mysteries? This is the boy who led the resistance at Hogwarts during his seventh year and stood against

Voldemort even though the Chosen One was believed dead? This is an Auror? On and on and on. Neville was used to going unappreciated. No matter, he will help in spite of their doubts.

****A/N:** I mostly made up the stuff about Puffapods and Snargaluffs in case you avid Herbologists were questioning Neville's knowledge. There is not much about Herbology in general out there. It was fun to write from the POV of Neville, who despite his newfound confidence is still that awkward boy we know and love (in my opinion). I even got to throw in a few Neville-isms. Draco is more prone to swearing in this fic. What do you think? Has Neville retained his Neville-ness? Review and let me know, lest my Neville be inadequate forever!**

7. Voldemort or Crazy?

****Got to do one of these every once in a while so here we go.****

****Disclaimer:** I do not own Harry Potter. Those rights go to the wonderful J.K. Rowling. ******

Chapter 7: Voldemort? Crazy? Madam Pomfrey?

So Longbottom wants to help? How very Gryffindor of him. It annoys Draco. Well, at least he has back up. He is not crazy. Yay. But crazy or fight Voldemort with bumbling Auror Longbottom and a traumatised kid? Crazy? Voldemort? Crazy? Voldemort? Crazy? Voldemort? Draco would prefer crazy. Screw Malfoy pride, he is going to die.

Longbottom is still standing there. "So, you need my help?" It has not quite registered with Draco that was what he asked. Before Longbottom can answer Ollie, who while they were distracted had slinked next to them and silently watched their exchange, interrupts. Draco thanks Merlin in his head. He does not need Longbottom of all people to think he is awkward. He has just been having a rough couple of days.

"You're Neville Longbottom," Ollie observes quietly. "The famous Auror." It does not sound like she is surprised by this. In fact, she seems a little awed by Longbottom. Longbottom. It is an injustice according to Draco, that it is not the Malfoy receiving the awe. Oh wait, he forgot his entire family name has been tarnished for generations to come.

Though Longbottom looks a tad astonished by the attention himself, he nods curtly. "You remember?"

Draco cuts across any response Ollie might have had. "Obviously," he drawls. "Idiot," he adds for good measure. Longbottom crosses his arms, resembling a stern parent about to reprimand a child. It irks Draco he is considered the child in this scenario.

"There's no need to get hostile, Malfoy. We can't afford to let past animosity," this is clearly a jab at Draco's previous bullying based on the pointed look aimed at him, "get in the way while we're dealing with this. We have to work together." So Longbottom is being the bigger man and not biting back. It is utterly infuriating. Damn Auror

and his damn improved social skills. And truly, Draco cannot fault him for his impeccable vocabulary, spoken like a true Pureblood "albeit a lesser one, which technically he is. Draco thinks he can taste the burn of bile in the back of his throat. Conceding to Longbottom's not complete incompetency and sickening Gryffindor chivalry. This week keeps getting better and better. By that he means it is terrible.

How does one acknowledge his own defeat while still retaining his (quickly receding) pride? Do so grudgingly and slightly mockingly. Draco does so perfectly; "Yes, work together. Wonderful." Longbottom ignores the sarcasm.

"First thing's first, can you both walk me through what happened to you?" Oh goodie, Longbottom has entered interrogation mode. _Did it have to be him?_ Draco laments in his head.

Thankfully Ollie takes the lead. Draco is relatively glad she is here, otherwise he and Longbottom might have already torn each other apart. "I just went to sleep like usual," based on Ollie's reaction earlier Draco doubts there is anything "usual" about her sleeping habits, "and I woke up two years younger. My roommates were acting different, like they didn't know" she trails off, pale. After a moment she shakes herself and continues; "Then someone was talking about Professor Riddle and I ended up here." For a second Draco is grateful Longbottom is too much of a gentleman to ask her to elaborate. If he were in the same situation he is not so sure he would be as tactful and Ollie is sensitive. But just for a _second_.

Expectantly, Longbottom looks to Draco. His turn then. "The same with me basically," he grunts, leaving the insult he wants to throw in out. And it is a good one too "Not that you can grasp the concept of basic beyond your stupidity." Damn it. Draco tucks it away for later. With Longbottom around to serve as inspiration his pillow will definitely be receiving a lot of masterful and witty slander soon. Maybe he will lighten up on the whole 'having a conscience' thing. After all of this Draco deserves a little opportunity to let his frustrations out on actual people. "I went to sleep, woke up at Hogwarts with a headache, found out the wizard who ruined my life is alive and apparently respected and went berserk on him, snapping his wand and winding up in the Hospital Wing for being 'crazy'. What about you, Longbottom? Have you got any heroic tales to tell? Any illuminating information to share?" Okay, Draco may be overdoing the sarcasm. He is stressed. Really, really stressed and Longbottom is the perfect target. He is not so cruel as to taunt a traumatised girl. Come on, give him a little credit!

Yes, Draco is really, really, really stressed.

"No," Longbottom replies without a hint of malice. Goddamn it! "It was the same with me, without the freaking out and cursing Voldemort," Longbottom adds awkwardly, scratching behind his ear. It is nice for Draco to know he is not a completely different person. How different can Neville Longbottom get in two years? "Honestly, I have no idea what is happening," Longbottom admits. "But we need to figure it out." Man, does Longbottom sound like a cheesy, overly brave and self-sacrificing stereotype or what? Draco should be paid to listen to this.

Before Longbottom can launch into a full-fledged motivational speech Madam Pomfrey bustles in, looking prepared to shoo him away with a broom. "It has been over five minutes," she declares, her tone implying Longbottom should be thankful for that much. "The patients need their rest." Draco swears she could have been a bodyguard for how fiercely protective she is. One look could scare away the toughest of criminals.

"Of course. Thank you for allowing me to see them," Longbottom says sincerely. Someone pass Draco a bucket, he is going to throw up. He can practically see the considerate light and polite sparkles shimmering off of him. Longbottom leaves as Madam Pomfrey leads Ollie back to her bed.

"Come along now dear," Madam Pomfrey coaxes. They do not get far. A crackle of lightning, spitting sparks, strikes the middle of the Hospital Wing. It sends Madam Pomfrey and Ollie flying to the ground. Longbottom barrels back into the room, wand raised while Draco mindlessly screams; "What the fuck was that?!" He scrambles for his wand but realises it is in Madam Pomfrey's office. Well. Crap.

Another bolt of lightning resounds down the wall, leaving harsh black trails in its wake. Longbottom fires a spell and Madam Pomfrey, recovering from her daze, pulls her own wand out of her billowing sleeve and proceeds to do the same. Draco yelps as the windows shatter, glass raining down near his bed. He jumps up only to have another realisation he has nowhere to go. Well. Double crap.

Ollie sprints across the Wing, shrieking as she dodges the sudden stream of burning electricity with the help of a fast spell from Longbottom. If he had not cast that spell quickly enough she would be fried. The thought terrifies Draco. But he has no time to worry about the reckless abandon of a third year, technically a fifth year, in the chaos. Several charred bodies, nearly formless with rippled grey skin, tumble from the ceiling. They look like unconscious acrobats performing for a crowd, after being burnt alive. Oh Merlin, Draco is going to throw up for real! No sarcasm involved to make a point now. Not with the rotting stench blanketing his senses, gag reflex kicking in as a response to the assault. Instead of hitting the ground the bodies jerk up and down like puppets, apparently attached to spider web thin strings. One is close enough that Draco can see the grey skin flaking from its misshapen body. Arms and legs jut out from its torso at unnatural angles, a poor imitation of life in a peeling, wrinkled shell. Fuel for nightmares. Madam Pomfrey knocks two down, one crumpling and the other's limbs thrown across the room, leaking black sand-like substance. Longbottom explodes one into dust with an echoing reducto.

Something red and sticky starts to seep onto the floors from seemingly nowhere as another lightning bolt booms. Screw his wand, Draco is getting out of here. Dashing madly, Draco slips on the liquid covering the floor and lands in it as he flees, on all fours. The position of the pathetic, the weak. Prey. With a passing thought "is this blood?" he skitters to his feet. A puppet corpse thing seems to bounce out of nowhere into Draco's path, its empty face level with him. It dances forward as Draco jumps back but with all traction lost he loses his footing again. The corpse flops onto Draco as he hits the ground, smothering him. It is not cold and clammy like he expected but warm and wet. Draco imagines in a brief

flash someone hugging warmth into them. Or siphoned blood so abundant that it poured out, leaving husks lined with escaping heat. With those images fresh in mind, Draco shudders and pushes it off him. He slips and fumbles towards the door, racing out of the Hospital Wing. Ollie bursts out behind him, followed by Longbottom, both drenched in the red substance.

"We need to get out of here!" Longbottom cries.

"You think I don't know that?" Draco shouts back, already running after the Auror.

Careening after them, Ollie yells; "What about Madam Pomfrey?" They run past some teachers, screeching for information at their backs and attempting to stop them. The three are too fast and escape the scene.

"The teachers will help her!" Draco responds without slowing. And so Longbottom, Draco and Ollie press on.

****A/N:** I am not one hundred percent satisfied with my characterisation of Draco. He is missing some of that bullying bite he had in the books, which is disappointing because it was part of his... well, not charm but I suppose interest as a character. But there is more to him than that and I hope I retained most of it while also developing his character (as it has been two years and he went through a very harrowing experience). Please tell me what you think in reviews or PMs. I also realise that his swearing may seem out of character but I have thought long and hard on the topic. I did not just add them because they are part of my everyday vocabulary or for no good reason but because Draco always idolised his parents and his lifestyle. I saw signs during the war that Draco was beginning to rebel slightly against them and I believe this was only the beginning. Up until that point I did not really see true rebellion from him but as a teenager and with Draco's personality it was more than likely he might. In my opinion his anger and angst that probably evolved after the war would cause him to act out, even if it is only in small ways. So my Draco started using swears, alone of course, he isn't that much of a rebel. This goes against his upbringing while not being full-blown. In a way it is very cunning rebellion as it is simple, something he consciously chose to do, easily hidden but also contrary to everything he was ever taught. It does not even require much effort. So Slytherin. Draco knows the power of words, he was never very physical after all. Also it is convenient to express Draco's changed persona but at the same time something that can seem very Draco. He is somehow dirty but polished simultaneously.

****Maybe you agree, maybe you don't. Let me know. Reviews, even negative ones, are always appreciated. Though constructive criticism is more welcome than hollow flames. Suggest improvements! I wish to learn. Draco's character analyse over. Sorry about rambling. I was just getting that off my chest.****

End
file.